

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



PA 14-115—sSB 322

Human Services Committee

Appropriations Committee

AN ACT CONNECTING THE PUBLIC TO BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE SERVICES

SUMMARY: This act requires the Office of the Healthcare Advocate, by January 1, 2015, to establish an information and referral service to help residents and providers receive (1) behavioral health care information and (2) timely referrals and access to behavioral health care providers. It specifies the responsibilities of the healthcare advocate or her designee in establishing the service.

The act requires the office, by February 1, 2016, and annually thereafter, to report to the Children's, Human Services, Insurance and Real Estate, and Public Health committees. The report must identify gaps in services and the resources needed to improve behavioral health care options for state residents.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2014

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HEALTHCARE ADVOCATE

The act requires the healthcare advocate or her designee to collaborate with stakeholders, including (1) state agencies, (2) the Behavioral Health Partnership, (3) community collaboratives, (4) the United Way's 2-1-1 Infoline program, and (5) providers. She or the designee must identify factors that prevent residents from obtaining adequate and timely behavioral health care services. These include, among other things, (1) gaps in private behavioral health care services and coverage and (2) barriers to accessing care.

The advocate or designee must also (1) coordinate a public awareness and educational campaign directing residents to the information and referral service and (2) develop data reporting mechanisms to determine its effectiveness. The latter must track the:

1. number of referrals to providers, by type and location of providers;
2. waiting time for services; and
3. number of providers who accept or reject service requests based on type of health care coverage.

BACKGROUND

Behavioral Health Partnership

This program provides behavioral health services to people with public insurance, such as children enrolled in HUSKY A (Medicaid) or HUSKY B (the

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State Children's Health Insurance Program). It is a collaboration of the departments of Children and Families, Mental Health and Addiction Services, and Social Services; an oversight council; and a national managed behavioral health care company.

OLR Tracking: KM:KLM:JKL:ro